

The days when the "shop" was the school, seem to have passed away. Learning by experience seems to be no longer the proper thing. There are training schools for almost every calling today. The magazines are filled with their advertisements. Many of them teach by mail. The school of acting is no new thing. I do not believe, however, any of them claim to teach by mail. The school system in the last few years, however, has even extended its field in the realm of the theatre, until it has invaded the play-writer's art. People are now "taught" to write good plays. Would that some of the writers of the drama, who have no difficulty in making a living at their calling, would attend the school, if it can do what it claims. But that is the very point. There are some things that cannot be taught. I believe it would be just as easy to teach one to become a poet or a novelist as a play writer. The drama, of course, requires technical knowledge, but even possessing this, you may never be able to write a play. It is almost absurd to state that this technical knowledge can be taught by mail. It may be acquired by watching the play itself. The creation of a story is something that cannot be taught. All the schools in the world would never teach one to evolve a plot. Yet you may have a plot, and still not be able to put it in dramatic form. I do not believe, however, that even this latter essential can be taught. It is something to be learned without a teacher. How many, do you suppose, of the successful play writers, were ever "taught," their art? It was something for which they may have had a natural talent, and which was perfected by their own unaided efforts and study. Their first works may have been rejected. This was just so much experience. And experience, after all, is the best school.

As I stated, if such a school could really be made of any value, it is a pity that some of the recognized play writers cannot be made to attend it. Mr. Hal, Field, as a writer of melodrama, is certainly quite well known. Yet we know what sort of stuff he turns out. His latest melodrama is entitled "A Working Girl's Wrong." It was given its first production on any stage this month, being presented at the Third Avenue Theatre, New York. Here is a brief synopsis of the play, as given in one of the New York papers:

"It tells the story of an unprotected girl who is enamored by her employer, and who endeavors to wrong her as he has done with other girls in his power. Finding that this girl, Mamie Molloy, refuses to become his mistress, he plots to win her by foul means. He employs a hanger-on about the factory, known as Thomas Bates, to place some money in the girl's pocket, and then for a while he accuses her of stealing it from him. Jack Fallon, the foreman of a chair factory close by, who is in love with Mamie, interferes and knocks down Wharton, the employer. Annie Lawrence, another victim of Wharton's, informs Mamie of the kind of man Wharton is, and then demands justice for herself and child from Wharton. He, however, refuses, and then decoys her to a lonely bridge at night and attempts to strangle her. Fallon coming along, at the cries for help from Wharton, stoops beside the fallen girl and picks up the bloody knife. Wharton at once accuses him of the murder. He is at once convicted, but at the last moment justice is meted out by the Governor of the State."

Now, isn't that entertaining? We can all see the hero picking up the bloody knife, and then at once being accused of the murder by the villain of the piece. That is the way it always happens. How many plays have just such a climax for one of its acts—usually the first.

Mr. Blair Meanley, the genial treasurer of the Bijou Theatre, last week lost his little girl, Julia Blair, the death of the child being quite sudden and unexpected. Both he and his wife have the sympathy of all their friends in this bereavement.

Will M. Cressy, after quoting the favorable opinion of a number of critics in regard to his sketch, "A Village Lawyer," gives that of one who did not agree with the others, and then says: "Gee, but somebody is a rotten critic." Critics sometimes come in for their share of criticism.

BRUCE CHESTERMAN.

With the final performance of "Friends" last night, the new Giffen Company completed the second week of the summer season. This it has firmly established itself through the production of the first two plays goes without saying, for everywhere the most enthusiastic comments have been passed upon the individual personnel of the organization and the collective quality of its work.

The new members who made their first appearance in "Friends"—Mr. Greenleaf and Miss Hall—have won their places in public favor at once and both should be strong factors in the future popularity of the company.

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R. B. KEGERRIS
(GIFFEN CO.)

romantic drama in the South, and wishing to offer for the third week of the season a play differing in every possible respect from the ones already produced. Manager Giffen turns to the romantic field and selects "Under the Red Robe," a play which stands in the very front rank of such dramatic compositions.

Its strength and attractiveness are already well known in Richmond, and a play that would more thoroughly establish the calibre of the present season would be almost impossible to find. As is perhaps well known, the play is a dramatization of Stanley Weyman's famous romance, the stage version being from the pen of Edward Rose, who also made the stage adaptation of the "Prisoner of Zenda." It might be well to state that the Edward Rose in question is the English, not the American Edward Rose, who has so many dramatic sins to answer for. The "Prisoner of Zenda" and "Under the Red Robe" have stood ever since they were written as the two best plays that have been made from books since that method of producing stage material became so extensive. "Under the Red Robe" is a strong, interest compelling story and the play partakes of the most interesting features of the book with the added attractiveness of presenting the familiar figures almost, as it were, in life.

The story is perhaps too well known to make it necessary to recount it here, except to say that it is one of the strongest love stories that the stage has seen for many a day. It is a highly colored chronicle of the complete metamorphosis produced in a roystering but at the same time highly chivalrous French follower of the great Cardinal Richelieu, by the influence of the one great passion. The story of Gil de Beaulieu and Rene de Cocheferet is one of the strongest that the stage has known in recent years, and it is at the same time absorbingly interesting and thoroughly wholesome. The play abounds in stirring situations that are logically conceived and splendidly carried out by the dramatist, one of whose most commendable characteristics is the unflinching excellence of his diction. It contains several incidents, including the spirited first act duel, which make one's pulses tingle.

As Gil de Beaulieu, Mr. Howard will be splendidly cast and will have ample opportunities to stamp himself still more firmly in popular favor. The part will call for all the art of which Mr. Howard is capable.

Miss Hall, in the opposite role of Rene, will be called upon to test her powers much more extensively than she was in "Friends," but if her work in that splendid play can be taken as a criterion, her

Rene will prove most gratifying and satisfactory.

Miss Tapley will again be enabled to look pretty, and Miss Wood has a good character part as Madame Zeton, the proprietress of the gambling room. Miss Barron's role will not be very significant, but her personality will make itself felt even in a minor character.

Mr. Greenleaf, who is a strong favorite, made so beyond any question by his work in last week's play, will be seen as Captain Larolle, the part created in New York by Robert Edson, who is now starring in "The Soldiers of Fortune." Both Mr. Greenleaf and Mr. Howard should be most picturesque in their becoming costumes.

Mr. Lane, who last week had the very difficult task of "making good" in what is technically known as the "heavy part," will this week portray a character of an altogether different description, one who is a strong sentimental interest, but one of great importance in the development of the story. Mr. Kegerreis will be more



ELLA HUGH WOOD
(GIFFEN CO.)

In evidence than he was in "Friends," and Mr. J. T. James will appear for the first time as the lieutenant. Mr. James is an actor of long and ripe experience. He was the original servant in "Secret Service," and he has held important engagements with the best managers for several years. He was last in Richmond with David Warfield in "The Auctioneer," playing the coachman.

Mr. Joseph Woodburn, who has made such a favorable impression here during the past week in his magnificent representation of Hans Otto, will be seen this week in the role of Richelieu, one of the most important in the play.

The production is a heavy one scenically, and the costumes should prove very attractive, as the time of the play is laid in a most picturesque period.

Performance of "Under the Red Robe" will be given every night during the week, with matinees on Wednesday and Saturday.

"Little Minister" at the Bijou.

To-morrow night brings "The Little Minister" and the George Fawcett Company back to the Bijou for a week's engagement. This play is unquestionably the most popular of all the plays pre-

sented by the George Fawcett forces this season, and its revival now, with a selected company, will be an event of unusual interest here. This, too, will be the last appearance of a George Fawcett company here this season.

No play ever placed on the stage has 'he purity, the delicacy, the beauty of this masterpiece from the pen of J. M. Barrie. The love interest, complicated enough to hold the attention steadily, is beautifully handled, and in the final scenes, where the Little Minister discovers the identity of Lady Babbie, the supposed gypsy, there is a refined humor and sentiment rarely seen on the stage. So great was the success of this play that Miss Maude Adam has never since been able to get away from it entirely.

Beginning with last season, Mr. Fawcett secured this play for his companies, and since that time it has been played many weeks in Baltimore and over the Southern circuit. Always it has played to capacity, and the demand for seats would indicate that this would be the case here next week. Mr. Wallace Wray will play the title part; Julia Marie Taylor, Lady Babbie, while Lucille La Verne, always popular here, will also be in the cast. Others in the company will be L. B. Carlton, Frank Craven, Edmund Eaton, Alfred Hudson, Jr., George Burlingame, Edwin Evans, Charles Kinsley, Frank Johnston, Molly Brady, Marion Ten Eyck. The usual matinees will be given during the week.

NOTTOWAY POLITICS

Nearly Every Position Has Opposing Candidates.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

BLACKSTONE, VA., May 30.—The campaign for county officers is beginning to get interesting in this, Nottoway, county already. The rumors of combinations are beginning to circulate, causing many candidates to publish cards denying the truth of such reports. Should the next few weeks increase the interest in proportion to what has been done in the past few, it would become extremely interesting.

For sheriff, E. M. Jones, the present incumbent, is being opposed by DeWitt Maxey, town sergeant of this place. For treasurer, Mr. J. L. Foxall, the present incumbent, is being opposed by Mr. E. F. Crowe, the depot agent of the Norfolk and Western at this place, and Mr. A. L. Woody, cashier of the new Citizens Bank at Crawe. For commonwealth's attorney, Hon. W. A. Watson, the present incumbent, has thus far no avowed opposition. It is reported, however, that he may be opposed later on by Judge C. F. Goodwyn, the present county judge of Nottoway. For commissioner of the revenue in District No. 2, Mr. J. W. Jones, the present incumbent, will be opposed by Mr. J. A. Walker, in District No. 1. Mr. J. H. Tunstall, the present incumbent, appears thus far to have no avowed opposition. In the minor offices, magistrates and constables, there seems very little interest taken thus far. In this district, however, Mr. C. W. Breedlove is opposing Mr. James F. Jones, the present constable, for that office.

The body of the unknown negro found in the river at Petersburg on Sunday morning proved to be Milford Pettus, a well known young colored man of this place. His family here made an effort to get his body exhumed in Petersburg, where it had been interred by the authorities, and removed to this place, but the officers there refused to permit the removal. The identification was made from his clothes, watch, books and papers which the Petersburg authorities had removed from the body before the burial.

The commencement exercises of Hogo Academy will begin here to-morrow and conclude on Tuesday. A full programme was published in The Times-Dispatch last Sunday.

It is reported that the friends of Mr. W. B. Booth, of Amelia county, are urging him to announce himself a candidate for the Legislature to fill the unexpired term of Hon. R. G. Southall. Hon. H. E. Lee, of Greve, is a candidate for both the unexpired and full term. There may be others to announce themselves later.

Invitations have been issued by Mr. and Mrs. John B. Jones, of Lunenburg county, to the marriage of their daughter

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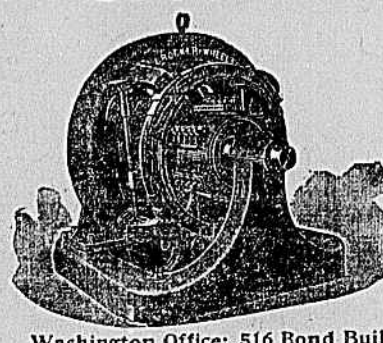
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there's many a tired back in old Rock-

ingham and other tobacco counties.

The work of setting out the young

plants is not so hard, but the "bending

over" is severe, indeed, on the back.

That picture we see so often in the

papers, where a fellow has just gotten

out of bed in the morning, with both

hands pressed to his back, is doubtless

a good photograph of the average tobacco

planter these damp days.

Not far from this place there lies buried

neath the surface of mother earth one

of the largest deposits of "shale," used

in the manufacture of terra-cotta piping,

tiling, etc., of the finest quality to be

found in this country.

The Van Lundy Company, at Pomona,

N. C., own some few acres, and ship large-

ly to their plant every day. The vein

runs north and south, and can be seen

upon the surface, but is found also at a

considerable depth beneath.

The "shale" is of very fine texture, en-

tirely free from grit, and there is appar-

ently an inexhaustible supply.

The Van Lundy people spend not less

than \$5,000 every season in labor and

freight, and it is surprising that they

or some other concern of the kind don't

establish a plant near the deposit, to

vein runs through the outskirts of the

town of Madison, N. C., and is within

sight of two railroads, branch lines of the

Southern and Norfolk and Western.

The section west of here, around Dan-

bury, the county seat of Stokes, is rich

in minerals, and the forests abound in

the finest of timber. One of the curiosi-

ties of that section is the "limber grit,"

or flexible stone.

Natives go to the quarry, saw or cut

the stone into pieces from twelve to

twenty-four inches long, by one to two

inches in breadth, and sell them to

the Piedmont, Moore and Vado Motors

at Danbury. These pieces are very

flexible, and can be bent at will. So far,

this stone has never been put to any practical

use, but it will one day find its proper

place in the world.

PROF. KAHN'S CLASS.

A Notable Occasion of the Y. M. C. A.

Last Tuesday Evening.

It is an unusual event that the Young

Men's Christian Association Hall is

crowded, not only the lower floor, but

also the gallery. Such, however, was the

case on Tuesday night last, when the

music class of Professor Sigmund Kahn

gave their first public recital before a

large and appreciative audience. The

programme for the occasion was particu-

larly well chosen and scholarly, includ-

ing in its numbers all of the classic com-

posers. It is safe to say that, notwith-

standing the difficult and exacting task

thus imposed upon the performers, not

one of them was found disqualified, but

on the contrary the programme was ren-

dered by the most delightful smooth-

ness, interrupted only by the many out-

bursts of applause which the excellent

efforts evoked. The entire recital was

particularly by the keenness of expres-

sion and the precision of technique. This

was especially marked in the perform-

ances of those of the graduating class.

The graduating class consisted of Misses

Sutherland, Emma Harvey and Delaney.

Of the minor pupils who participated in

the programme it remains but to be said

that they rendered their portion with the

utmost ease, and, like the more advanced

ones, proved themselves indubitably able

to the test assigned them.

Besides the piano recital there were two

vocal solos by pupils of Professor Kahn's

vocal class. The first was sung by Mr.

Boyd, the second by Miss Carson, both of

whom were encored. In conclusion oc-

casional is taken to say something of Pro-

fessor Kahn, through whose careful train-

ing belongs the credit for the auda-

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